campus, including funding a new student center. Alumni have been rejuvenated and their positive excitement has led to more and greater financial commitments to the institution. His direction created a vibrant and engaging Homecoming event that has Belhaven alumni eagerly anticipating their annual visit to Jackson, Mississippi.

Belhaven College and Mississippi will miss Don and Jeannie Ray, but the First Congregational Church of Otsego, Michigan will benefit from his years of experience as a pastor and administrator. Before serving in development in higher Christian education including service at Belhaven College, Millsaps College, and Wheaton College, Don served at various churches as a youth pastor and senior pastor.

Don excelled in his previous career of financial planner. He began with Connecticut General Life Insurance in 1964 as an estate planner and business analyst. He moved up the corporate ranks through Northwestern Life Insurance and A.G. Edwards & Sons. He was selected by ''Money Magazine'' as one of the ''200 Best Financial Planners in America'' in 1987 and again in 1990. In 1991 he left Financial Review Services, where he served as president of the full services financial planning firm, to begin serving higher Christian education.

For about 25 years, Don Ray has been a Certified Financial Planner and he has a total of 40 years in the financial and estate planning industry. He is a past president and chairman of the board of the Mississippi Chapter of the International Association of Financial Planning, has served as an adjunct faculty member of the College for Financial Planning, and has been a member of both the Registry for Practicing Financial Planners and the Institute for Certified Financial Planners. His training in finance has benefited the Kingdom through gifts to education, churches, and other organizations for many years. He has served on the boards of several Christian organizations including Pioneer Bible Translators, Wheaton Christian Academy High School, Windsor Park Manor Retirement Center, Marble Retreat for Clergy, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the Board of Stewards at Galloway United Methodist Church. Don and Jeannie both have served long hours in ministries at Galloway in Jackson and that congregation will certainly miss their gifts and their spirit of servanthood.

I know Belhaven College will be sad to see him go, though they, too, are excited about his new opportunity. I believe Belhaven President Dr. Roger Parrott described Don Ray's service best: ''Don was exactly what we needed for this season of Belhaven's growth. He has helped us broaden our base of support among our friends and alumni, crafted together major gifts that have catapulted us forward, and created a platform of professionalism among the team that will carry us forward. Please join us in praying for Don's ministry.''

The motto of Belhaven College is ''to serve, not to be served.'' That phrase is the executive summary of Don Ray's life so far, and I believe will continue for many years to come. I hope Congress will join me and Belhaven College, a great Christian liberal arts college in my district, in saluting the service of Don Ray and wishing him the best in his return to the ministry.

IN RECOGNITION OF SAMUEL ALVIN ''SAMMY'' BRASHER

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Samuel Alvin ''Sammy'' Brasher—known to many of us as the man with the harmonica.

Sammy Brasher was an inspiration to us all. Born in 1959 with Down syndrome, Sammy was not expected to live a full life. When he was born doctors told his parents he would only have 3 years on Earth. He lived to be 44.

Mr. Speaker, Sammy Brasher is a shining example to us all. Never one to give up easily, Sammy lived his life as a testament to what we all can be, and what we all can achieve. He never let his health slow him down, and kept us smiling with his ever-present musical companion, his harmonica.

Sammy Brasher's memory will always be with us, and so will his life. His smile, his harmonica, and his honesty touched us all. At this difficult time we grieve for his family and remember them in our hearts, and in our prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG SAFETY AND AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Prescription Drug Safety and Affordability Act. For far too long, the pharmaceutical industry has jeopardized patient safety and inflated prescription drug prices by using tax-deductible dollars to underwrite their marketing efforts. The Prescription Drug Safety and Affordability Act would root out this unethical and potentially fraudulent behavior by denying tax deductions to pharmaceutical companies for the gifts they lavish on physicians.

Recently, Congress passed a new Medicare prescription drug benefit that falls far short of giving seniors the relief they need from the high prices of prescription drugs. In fact, the average senior will still pay $1660 out of pocket per year under the new drug benefit, and a total of $2080 out of pocket when premiums are included. Unfortunately, the new drug bill does nothing to lower prescription drug prices. In fact, it specifically prevents the government from using the bargaining power of 40 million beneficiaries to negotiate lower drug prices. At the same time, it continues to prohibit seniors from shopping for a better price on the global market, despite broad bipartisan support for allowing them to do so.

Relief is all the more urgent because prescription drug prices are rising for seniors, who now pay an average of $2,322 for their drugs. Between 1998 and 2003, of the 50 drugs most commonly prescribed to seniors, nearly three-quarters of them increased in price by at least one and one-half times the rate of inflation, and more than half increased by at least three times the rate of inflation. We must do all that we can to lower the price of prescription drugs and to spend our healthcare dollars wisely.

Yet, drug companies are spending billions of dollars on promotions to entice doctors to prescribe their products, and these dollars are tax deductible. An April 2002 survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that pharmaceutical companies spent $13 billion in 2001 on incentives for doctors, or more than $15,000 per doctor. Sixty-one percent of physicians surveyed said they had received gifts from the industry. Drug companies often give out free meals, tickets to the theater, concerts, or sporting events, gifts such as watches and jewelry, and pay for physicians' travel to symposiums or conferences.

These gifts are often attempts by the pharmaceutical industry to induce doctors to prescribe their products even when it is not in the patient's best interest. For example, recently disclosed court documents have revealed that Warner-Lambert encouraged hundreds of doctors to prescribe Neurontin for unapproved uses by inviting them to dinners, weekend trips to resorts, and free tickets to the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. Just a few months ago, the U.S. Attorney's office filed court papers accusing the company of implementing a ''marketing scheme that is rife with false statements and fraudulent conduct.'' The U.S. Attorney concluded that the public interest can only be served when drug promotion is ''free of the insidious effects of kickbacks and related financial conflicts of interest,'' which artificially inflate sales and prices. These gift-giving campaigns contribute to preference and rapid prescribing of new drugs, and decreased prescribing of generics. In other words, tax-deductible dollars contribute to the rising prices of prescription drugs.

These campaigns and inflated prices are particularly outrageous, given the level of profit the drug companies make at the expense of patients. The pharmaceutical industry is consistently the most profitable industry in America, with profit margins in 2001 more than five times the median for fortune 500 companies. Spending on prescription drugs has increased by 20% each year between 1997 and 2001. Between January 1997 and January 2002, the average price of the most commonly used prescription drugs for seniors rose by 27.6%, more than twice the rate of inflation.

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) pretended to discourage these improper marketing ploys by issuing conflict-of interest guidelines in April 2002. After announcing the guidelines with fanfare, they then paid the American Medical Association to ''educate'' their members on these guidelines-that is, they gave doctors financial incentives to promote ethical guidelines that called for an end to financial incentives! It is obvious that PhRMA is not serious about ending the practice of giving financial incentives to doctors. This bill would create an incentive for drug companies to adhere to their own code of conduct.

Not only are these incentives unethical, but they could even be illegal. The HHS Inspector General issued final guidance to pharmaceutical manufacturers saying that many of these gifts to doctors could be considered illegal kickbacks. By allowing tax deductions for these gifts, current tax law actually encourages this potentially illegal practice. This bill seeks to redress this perverse incentive.